

Cllr Claire Wright

Monthly Report to West Hill Parish Council 3rd Nov 2020

Ottery Community Larder

Ottery Community Volunteers launched the Ottery Larder last week at short notice, following the disappointing parliamentary vote not to finance free school meals for vulnerable children during holidays for the duration of the pandemic.

The number of students registered for free school meals at Ottery St Mary schools has increased markedly since January this year.

Last week, the larder provided a fantastic service from the Institute for those families in need last week and will be fully launched and more widely publicised, later this month.

There has been a wonderful community response to the larder in terms of volunteers offering to help out and also local shops donating cooked food and fresh ingredients.

Redbridge – Harpford

I am happy to report that Harpford Bridge has now been repaired. Cllr Val Ranger and I launched an online petition asking for urgent repairs, which attracted over 2000 signatures during August, as Devon County Council officers had indicated that it was in such a poor state it would probably need to be closed permanently from this autumn. This would have been a huge loss to the popular public footpath The East Devon Way and also would have meant the loss of a safe walking route for schoolchildren walking to Newton Poppleford Primary School from Harpford.

The rock armouring now installed will hopefully mean that the bridge will remain open for several more years. There will be also now be talks with local landowners for a new location for a bridge longer term.

Help available to pay for basic household essentials

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic is continuing to put a huge financial strain on some people. Employment situations are changing rapidly and for some their income now no longer covers what they need, or they have lost their jobs completely.

Help is available. If you, or someone you know, is worrying about money and how to pay for basic household essentials, please apply for extra assistance through funding that we have made available via your district council's hardship fund.

To find out more about what support is available in Devon, including how to access local financial support, where to find foodbanks and community larders, free meals during the school holidays and what to do if you're on a low income and need to self-isolate.

We are continuing to work with district councils to ensure hardship support is available to vulnerable children and families in Devon this winter. And this week we pledged extra funding to ensure no child goes hungry. More here -

<https://www.devonnewscentre.info/devon-pledges-extra-support-for-vulnerable-children-and-families/>

Be on the look-out for potential scammers

Devon County Council is advising everyone to stay alert to possible scams associated with the coronavirus pandemic following a report of someone visiting homes claiming to be from the national Test and Trace programme.

The visitor told a North Devon resident that his household had been linked as a contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case in Exeter, and that therefore he needed to self-isolate. He then offered the gentleman a food parcel for £20. He had no identification, and was driving a small dark car.

This was a scam unfortunately.

The NHS Test and Trace programme publishes details of how they inform people, and importantly what they will never do or ask a person to do.

[Information about the NHS Test and Trace programme and how it works, is available on the government's website.](#)

If you are contacted by an individual or a company that you suspect is a scam, [you can report it to Action Fraud.](#)

For [consumer advice about how to prevent being scammed, visit Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards' website](#)

Claire Wright

Devon County Councillor - Otter Valley Ward